To establish student loan borrowers’ rights to basic consumer protections, reasonable and flexible repayment options, access to earned credentials, and effective loan cancellation in exchange for public service, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 28, 2015

Ms. WILSON of Florida introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, the Judiciary, and Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

A BILL

To establish student loan borrowers’ rights to basic consumer protections, reasonable and flexible repayment options, access to earned credentials, and effective loan cancellation in exchange for public service, and for other purposes.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

4 This Act may be cited as the “Student Loan Debt
5 Protection Act of 2015”. 
TITLE I—BORROWERS’ RIGHT TO BASIC CONSUMER PROTECTIONS

SEC. 101. DISCHARGEABILITY OF STUDENT LOANS IN BANKRUPTCY CASES.

Section 523(a) of title 11 of the United States Code is amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (8); and

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (9) through (19) as paragraphs (8) through (18).

SEC. 102. REINSTATEMENT OF THE 6-YEAR STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS FOR STUDENT LOANS.

Subsection (a) of section 484A of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1091a(a)) is amended to read as follows:

“(a) STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS.—Notwithstanding any Federal or State statutory, regulatory, or administrative limitation on the period within which debts may be enforced—

“(1) an institution that receives funds under this title may file a suit or initiate or take another action for collection of a refund due from a student on a grant made, or work assistance awarded, under this title, during the 6-year period beginning on the day after the refund first became due (exclusive of
period during which the State statute of limitations
otherwise applicable to a suit under this paragraph
would be tolled under State law);

“(2) a guaranty agency that has an agreement
with the Secretary under section 428(c) may file a
suit or initiate or take another action for collection
of the amount due from a borrower on a loan made
under part B during the 6-year period beginning on
the day after such guaranty agency reimburses the
previous holder of the loan for its loss on account of
the default of the borrower (exclusive of period dur-
ing which the State statute of limitations otherwise
applicable to a suit under this paragraph would be
tolled under State law);

“(3) an institution that has an agreement with
the Secretary pursuant to section 487 may file a suit
or initiate or take another action for collection of the
amount due from a borrower on a loan made under
part D or E after the default of the borrower on
such loan during the 6-year period beginning on the
day after the date of the default of the borrower
with respect to such amount (exclusive of period
during which the State statute of limitations other-
wise applicable to a suit under this paragraph would
be tolled under State law); or
“(4) the Secretary, the Attorney General, or the administrative head of another Federal agency, as the case may be, may file a suit or initiate or take another action for collection of a refund due from a student on a grant made under this title, or for the repayment of the amount due from a borrower on a loan made under this title that has been assigned to the Secretary under this title, during the 6-year period beginning on the day after the refund or the amount first became due.”.

SEC. 103. PROHIBITION OF COLLECTION OF STUDENT LOANS THROUGH CERTAIN OFFSETS OR THROUGH WAGE GARNISHMENT.

(a) Prohibition on Offset of Social Security Benefits.—Section 3716(e)(3)(A) of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in clause (i), by striking “except as provided in clause (ii)” and inserting “except as provided in clauses (ii) and (iii)”;

(2) by adding at the end the following new clause:

“(iii) Notwithstanding clause (i), any payments due to an individual under Federal benefits programs cited under clause (i) shall not be subject to offset under this subsection if the offset is for payments certified by the
Department of Education under a program administered by the Secretary of Education under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.).”.

(b) Prohibition on Offset of Tax Refund.—Section 3720A(a) of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking “Any Federal agency” and inserting “(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), any Federal agency”;

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(2) Any past-due legally enforceable debt owed by an individual to the Department of Education under a program administered by the Secretary of Education under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.) shall not be subject to notification under paragraph (1), and any refund of Federal taxes paid by the individual shall not be subject to reduction under subsection (c) for such debt.”.

(c) Prohibition on Wage Garnishment.—Section 3720D(a) of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking “Notwithstanding” and inserting: “(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) and notwithstanding”; and
(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(2) Any delinquent nontax debt owed by an individual to the Department of Education under a program administered by the Secretary of Education under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.) shall not be subject to collection under this section through garnishment of disposable pay of the individual.”.

TITLE II—BORROWER’S RIGHT TO REASONABLE AND FLEXIBLE REPAYMENT OPTIONS

SEC. 201. EXCLUSION FROM GROSS INCOME FOR DISCHARGE OF STUDENT LOAN INDEBTEDNESS.

(a) In general.—Paragraph (1) of section 108(f) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking “if such discharge” and all that follows and inserting a period.

(b) Student loans.—Paragraph (2) of section 108(f) of such Code is amended by striking “made by—” and all that follows and inserting the following: “. Such term includes indebtedness used to refinance indebtedness which qualifies as a student loan under the preceding sentence.”.

(c) Conforming amendments.—Section 108(f) of such Code is amended by striking paragraphs (3) and (4).
(d) **Effective Date.**—The amendments made by this section shall apply to discharges of indebtedness after the date of the enactment of this Act.

**SEC. 202. 529 PLAN DISTRIBUTION FOR STUDENT LOAN PAYMENTS.**

(a) **In General.**—Subparagraph (A) of section 529(e)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking clause (iii) and inserting the following new clause:

“(iii) interest or principal paid with respect to a qualified education loan (as defined in section 221) with respect to a designated beneficiary.”.

(b) **Conforming Amendments.**—

(1) Section 529(e)(3)(A) of such Code is amended by striking the second sentence.

(2) Section 72(t)(7)(A) of such Code is amended by inserting “determined without regard to subparagraph (A)(iii) thereof” after “section 529(e)(3)”.

(3) Section 530(b)(2)(A)(i) of such Code is amended by inserting “determined without regard to subparagraph (A)(iii) thereof” after “section 529(e)(3)”.
(c) **Effective Date.**—The amendments made by this section shall apply to distributions made after the date of the enactment of this Act.

**SEC. 203. INCLUSION OF PARENT PLUS LOANS IN REPAYMENT PROGRAMS.**

(a) **Income Contingent Repayment Plan.**—Section 455(d)(1)(D) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087e(d)(1)(D)) is amended by striking “, except that the plan described in this subparagraph shall not be available to the borrower of a Federal Direct PLUS loan made on behalf of a dependent student;”.

(b) **Income-Based Repayment.**—

(1) **Section 493C.**—Section 493C of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1098e) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a)—

(i) by striking “this section” and all that follows through “hardship” and inserting “In this section, the term ‘partial financial hardship’”; and

(ii) by striking “(other than an excepted PLUS loan or excepted consolidation loan)”;

(B) in subsection (b)—
(i) in paragraph (1), by striking 
“(other than an excepted PLUS loan or
excepted consolidation loan)”;
and
(ii) in paragraph (6)(A), by striking
“(other than an excepted PLUS loan or
excepted consolidation loan)”;
and
(C) in subsection (e), by striking “(other
than an excepted PLUS loan or excepted con-
solidation loan),”.

(2) Section 455(d)(1)(E).—Section
455(d)(1)(E) of such Act (20 U.S.C.
1087e(d)(1)(D)) is amended by striking “, except
that the plan described in this subparagraph shall
not be available to the borrower of a Federal Direct
PLUS Loan made on behalf of a dependent student
or a Federal Direct Consolidation Loan, if the pro-
cceeds of such loan were used to discharge the liabil-
ity on such Federal Direct PLUS Loan or a loan
under section 428B made on behalf of a dependent
student”.

(c) Pay As You Earn.—The income-contingent re-
payment plan (based on the President’s “Pay As You
Earn” repayment initiative) implemented in parts 674,
682, and 685 of title 34, Code of Federal Regulations,
as amended by the final regulations published by the De-
partment of Education in the Federal Register on November 1, 2012 (77 Fed. Reg. 66088 et seq.), shall be available to borrowers of—

(1) a Federal Direct PLUS loan made on behalf of a dependent student; and

(2) a Federal Direct Consolidation Loan, the proceeds of which were used to discharge the liability on a Federal Direct PLUS Loan under part D of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 or a loan under section 428B of such Act made, insured, or guaranteed on behalf of a dependent student.

(d) Loan Forgiveness for Service in Areas of National Need.—Section 428K(a)(2) of such Act (20 U.S.C. 1078–11(a)(2)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking “(other than an excepted PLUS loan or an excepted consolidation loan (as such terms are defined in section 493C(a)))”; and

(2) in subparagraph (B), by striking “(other than an excepted PLUS loan or an excepted consolidation loan)”.

(e) Other Repayment Plans.—Any plan for the repayment of loans made under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.), which
is finalized by the Secretary of Education on or after the
date of enactment of this Act, shall include the repayment
of a loan under section 428B of the Higher Education
Act of 1965, or a Federal Direct PLUS Loan under part
D of title IV of such Act, that is made, insured, or guaran-
teed on behalf of a dependent student.

TITLE III—BORROWERS’ RIGHT
TO A MEANINGFUL DEGREE

SEC. 301. PROHIBITION ON SUSPENSIONS OF PROFES-
SIONAL LICENSES FOR LOAN DEFAULT.

No evidence of an individual’s default on the repay-
ment of a loan made, insured, or guaranteed under title
IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070
et seq.) may be admitted into evidence in a Federal or
State proceeding involving the individual’s professional or
vocational license.

SEC. 302. PROHIBITION ON LOSS OF ACCESS TO TRAN-
SCRIPTS FOR LOAN DEFAULT.

Section 487(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965
(20 U.S.C. 1094(a)) (as amended by section 301) is fur-
ther amended by adding at the end the following new para-
graph:

“(31)(A) The institution will not prohibit a stu-
dent from accessing the student’s transcripts, degree
scrolls, or other certifications of coursework or edu-
cational attainments at the institution because the student is in default on the repayment of a loan made, insured, or guaranteed under this title.

“(B) For purposes of this paragraph, the term ‘student’ includes former students.”

TITLE IV—RIGHT TO EFFECTIVE LOAN CANCELLATION FOR BORROWERS ENGAGED IN PUBLIC SERVICE CAREERS

SEC. 401. EXTENSION OF LOAN CANCELLATION FOR BORROWERS EMPLOYED IN PUBLIC SERVICE JOBS FOR 5 YEARS.

Section 455(m) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087e(m)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (3) and (4) as paragraphs (4) and (5), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (2), the following:

“(3) ADDITIONAL LOAN CANCELLATION FOR CERTAIN BORROWERS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall—

“(i) after the conclusion of the employment period described in subparagraph (B)(ii) for an eligible borrower, cancel the obligation to repay 10 percent of the bal-
ance of interest and principal due, as of
the time of such cancellation, on the eligi-
ble Federal Direct Loans made to the bor-
rower under this part; and

“(ii) after the loan cancellation under
clause (i), carry out such loan cancellation
for each year in which the borrower makes
12 monthly payments on the eligible Fed-
eral Direct Loans pursuant to any one or
a combination of the repayment plans de-
scribed in subclauses (I) through (IV) of
subparagraph (B)(i) and is employed in a
public service job during the period in
which the borrower makes each of such
payments, except that once the borrower is
eligible for the loan cancellation under
paragraph (2) the Secretary shall carry out
the loan cancellation under paragraph (2)
in lieu of the loan cancellation under this
clause.

“(B) ELIGIBLE BORROWER.—In this para-
graph, an eligible borrower is a borrower who—

“(i) has made 60 monthly payments

on the eligible Federal Direct Loan after
October 1, 2015, pursuant to any one or a combination of the following—

“(I) payments under an income-based repayment plan under section 493C;

“(II) payments under a standard repayment plan under subsection (d)(1)(A), based on a 10-year repayment period;

“(III) monthly payments under a repayment plan under subsection (d)(1) or (g) of not less than the monthly amount calculated under subsection (d)(1)(A), based on a 10-year repayment period; or

“(IV) payments under an income contingent repayment plan under subsection (d)(1)(D); and

“(ii) has been employed in a public service job during the period in which the borrower makes each of the 60 payments described in clause (i).”